

Unit 6: Workplace Issues
Z-Chapter 25
ONLINE CONTENT (1 H)

Unit Objectives:

- Determine your risk for encountering a workplace issue that can affect your health or well-being. (1,7)*
- Understand ergonomics and ways to protect yourself from workplace injuries. (5,7)*
- Analyze workplace bullying and harassment. (3,5)*
- Recognize the risk for violence at work and how to reduce your risk. (2,5,7)*
- Create a personal plan to handle workplace problems such as staffing shortages and being assigned to an unfamiliar workplace. (3,7)*

*Course Objectives

Case Studies

Due March 11, 2024 @ 0800 in the Z-CH # 25 dropbox

1. As a nursing student, Angie learned the proper handling of patients in her fundamentals course. During clinical rotation, Angie is assigned a patient with left-sided weakness related to a stroke and dementia. She reviews her notes on positioning, transferring, and handling a patient with musculoskeletal weakness. When entering the patient's room, Angie finds the patient halfway out of bed. She rushes to assist the patient to sit and immediately afterwards feels a sharp pain in her back. Subsequently, Angie has a herniated lumbar disk and is unable to continue nursing school.
 - a) How should Angie have approached moving this patient?
Angie should have assessed the situation and used a device or a colleague to help reposition the patient.
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
She was concerned about the patient and rushed to help.
 - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
Nurses are in direct patient care meaning they handle the patients firsthand. This includes turning, toileting, lifting, repositioning, transferring, and providing ADL's. The patient's rooms may be disorganized causing the nurse to have to bend and stretch in odd ways to provide care. The back injuries are often debilitating creating an even shorter supply of nurses.
 - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.
If this legislation was in place the nurse would not have run into the room with no devices to help move the patient. If the devices were already available, the nurse would have known that they were needed and used them without hesitation. This would have saved the nurse from injury.

2. Becky graduated from nursing school a year ago and since then, has worked on a neurology unit. Normally a happy and healthy person, Becky recently noticed that she always feels run down and is losing her hair. During the past year, she was told that her assessment skills were lacking because she missed an important finding on a patient while covering for another nurse. Her supervisor seemingly assigns her high-risk admits every time she works. Her co-workers complain that Becky always gets the lightest patient assignments and should take the admissions. Last week, she overheard another nurse saying, "Becky is almost useless. She spends so much time with her patients she can never help other nurses. "Becky feels physically ill every time she goes to work. She wonders if these "tests" of her nursing skills will ever end.

a) What type of violence is Becky experiencing?

Lateral violence.

b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?

Work may be monitored to the point where you begin to doubt yourself and have difficulty with regular tasks. Might be asked to do difficult or seemingly pointless tasks and be ridiculed or criticized when you can't get them done.

c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?

There are three steps to minimize bullying: 1) name it. Say out loud that you have a bully, validate it for yourself. 2) seek respite. Take time off of work and bullet proof yourself and complete 5 things. Check mental health, physical health, research legal options, collect data on bullying and the impact it has on your unit, and lastly job search. Last step 3) expose the bully. Your mental and emotional health needs you to give the employer a chance to address the situation.

d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?

If her supervisor continues to brush off the situation or concern, she can go to the next level of management or even HR. If nothing is still done Becky can find a new job at another facility.

3. Amanda is caring for an 82-year-old patient with a fractured hip and dementia. In the shift report, she learns that the patient becomes agitated and combative at night. During her evening shift assessment, Amanda notes that the patient does not know where she is or why Amanda is in her room. Amanda remembers her hospital training on dealing with agitated patients by using soothing tones when addressing the patient and ensuring a calm environment. During assessment, the patient yells that Amanda is killing her. She begins swinging at Amanda with the telephone, breaking her jaw. Amanda runs out of the room, and her co-worker calls a "Code White."

a. What is a Code White, and how would it help in this situation?

Code white can be called by anyone for any person who is becoming loud, abusive, threatening verbally or physically, or harmful in any manner. This code would help keep Amanda and the patient safe. The patient would not have been able to hurt Amanda and the patient would be prevented from causing further injury to herself.

- b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
The patient has dementia and is known to become combative and confused at nighttime. These elements can cause the patient to act in a fight or flight mode, meaning they will do anything to keep themselves safe.
 - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
Patients can be put in restraints and sedatives can be used when necessary. Patients can also have one on one sitters who can reorient the patient as needed. In certain cases, even a family member will be allowed to stay with the patient to help sooth them.
 - d. If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer.
The facility should have an across-the-board policy for these types of situations. No matter what floor. The situation should be approached with caution no matter what. At the first sign of agitation the nurse should have asked for another person to accompany her in the room to prevent escalation and watch the patient while the nurse is providing care.
4. In reviewing available hospital employment, you identify three potential positions as a staff nurse in orthopedics. Because orthopedics is where you would like to work, you evaluate each of the positions:
- Position 1: A regional medical center, with a nurse to patient ratio of 5:1. Total patient care is expected of all nurses, and there is only one nursing assistant assigned to each unit. The hospital recently purchased safe handling equipment for every unit.
 - Position 2: An urban hospital with a nurse to patient ratio of 9:1. There is one nursing assistant assigned to every nurse. The hospital has new patient handling equipment, although it is shared between two units.
 - Position 3: a local hospital with a nurse to patient ratio 7:1. There is one nursing assistant for every nine patients. The hospital is moving toward Magnet status and uses a shared governance model.
- a) Explore each position in relation to your safety as a nurse. What are the benefits and detriments of each position?
 - 1) The benefits of this position would be the ratio and availability of safe handling equipment. The less patients that a nurse assigned the better. This means the nurse can focus more on each patient and provide better care for

them. Also, with the safety devices this assures that nurses can prevent injuries.

- 2) The detriments of this position are the ratio and patient handling equipment being shared between two units. 9 patients to one nurse is not safe even if each nurse has their own nursing assistant. Nursing assistants cannot provide the care that nurses can. And if two patients or more are critical it could be detrimental to their health. The sharing of the equipment is also a major problem. If I were to need a handling device and it were in use in the other unit I would have to wait until they were done with it. Which could be a serious problem in patient care depending on the situation. The only benefit would be having their own personal nursing assistant.
- 3) Detriments are once again patient to nurse ratio. 7 patients to one nurse is not safe for the nurse or the patients. One nursing assistant to 9 patients could be good or bad depending on the patients. If the patients are very needy and demand a lot of care that nursing assistant could not be available all night to one of those nurses. The benefits of this facility would be the positive aspects of becoming a magnet hospital and using the shared governance model. The nurse knows that they will always have a say in their environment and what happens in patient care.

- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?

I would have to say position 1. There are safety devices available on every unit, the patient to nurse ratio is low, and even though there is only one nursing assistant per unit they still have help.

- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
How many nurses are on at one time? Are they currently short-staffed? What is the turnover rate?

- d) The hospital in position 3 is described as working towards Magnet status. What impact might this have on your decision to accept or turn down an employment offer?

This means that hospitals can employ and retain nurses due to their high job satisfaction. This may have a more positive influence on accepting an offer at this hospital. I would have to know more about their facility and availability of safe handling devices.

In order to receive full credit (1 H class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety by the assigned due date and time will result in missed class time.